

FROM THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT TO CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY

Introduction to Feminist Philosophy

Phil/GWS 330, Spring 2024
MW 3:30–4:45pm, Harvill 102

Instructor: Ding (din@arizona.edu)
Office: Social Sciences 138
Office Hours: W 1:45–3:15pm & by appointment

1. COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

As the women's liberation movement swept through the United States in the 60s and 70s, communities of feminists soon began to explore how philosophy could and should respond to feminism. Not only did these efforts result in significant philosophical contributions to feminism, but feminism has since profoundly challenged, expanded, and reshaped philosophy in turn.

In this course, we will trace the development of contemporary feminist philosophy from the early days of the women's liberation movement all the way to the present, with an emphasis on trans and queer voices, issues, and experiences throughout this fraught history. We will discuss feminist attempts to formulate, answer, and later contest questions about the nature of sex, gender, construction, and oppression; pleasure and desire under patriarchy; knowledge, ignorance, and objectivity; the relationship between feminist, left, antiracist, disability, queer, and trans politics; and the meaning and paradigms of liberation. In so doing, a broader aim of this course is to consider the ideas suggested in these answers as *conclusions*—rather than unexamined presumptions—of a critical philosophical project to uncover and resist a social reality that otherwise appears so natural, inevitable, unremarkable, and even invisible.

2. EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

My expectations are, at the conclusion of this course, you will be able to

- a) Explain major issues, arguments, and debates in contemporary feminist philosophy, with a view to their origins in the women's liberation movement;
- b) Charitably interpret and critically assess philosophical texts and arguments;

- c) Construct a well-reasoned, original argument that responds to a philosophical issue in or about contemporary feminism;
- d) Discuss how philosophical reflection may shed light on contested political and social issues in a divided contemporary society such as the United States;
- e) Discuss how conceptual tools may help to clarify and express minority experiences that are otherwise masked by oppressive social structures.

Phil 330 is cross-listed in Gender and Women's Studies. It fulfills the Tier 2 Humanities and Diversity Emphasis requirements of the General Education Curriculum as well as the Ethics and Value Theory requirement of the philosophy major.

3. REQUIRED TEXTS

The following book is required for this class:

- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage Books, 2011). Paperback, 978-0307277787, \$17.85.

I will make all other required readings available digitally on D2L through the university library. If there are any barriers (financial, technical, or otherwise) that make it difficult for you to access the texts, please don't be afraid to let me know.

4. ASSESSMENT

Participation	10%
Midterm and Final Exams	60%
Final Project	30%

Both of the exams as well as the final project must be completed in order to pass this class. **An F received on any work due to academic dishonesty is grounds for an F in the course.**

4.1. Letter Grades

The University of Arizona Standard Letter Grade Scheme will apply:

A	90% and above	D	60%–69.9%
B	80%–89.9%	E/F	59.9% and below
C	70%–79.9%		

Requests for incomplete (I) or withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies, which are available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system>.

4.2. Participation

In approaching a philosophical issue, we will often find ourselves in the middle of a long conversation among many different authors. A hallmark of what we do in philosophy is the way we participate in this conversation and position ourselves in relation to these authors: we are not outside observers just here to report what each author has said and perhaps to summarize some of the points of agreement and

disagreement; rather, we are equal parties to the conversation, just like everybody else. It's helpful, then, to think of philosophy classes not as where you come to be lectured about particular philosophical views, but as where we gather to *do philosophy together*, to contribute our own insights to ongoing philosophical conversations and think through these difficult issues for ourselves.

Participation in philosophy courses also serves a wide range of pedagogical purposes: class discussions help students make sense of difficult ideas and arguments in the texts; they help students learn to explain and apply concepts, analyze and assess arguments, and formulate and respond to worries and objections; in addition, they contribute to other students' learning experience by helping to build a vibrant, mutually supportive classroom environment that encourages questions, exchange of ideas, and philosophical reflection.

You are expected to regularly contribute to class discussions and participate in class activities, and to do that, you are expected to have read the assigned texts *carefully* and *critically* in advance of each class (remember to bring a copy to class with you as we will often look at difficult passages together). It's useful to keep in mind that philosophical writing is, at bottom, *argumentative*—that is, its goal is to *defend* or *criticize* a particular view. As you do the readings, be sure to:

- Keep track of what the author says they mean by a particular term or distinction, and take note of terms and distinctions that don't quite make sense to you.
- Identify the view the author is defending and the argument they are offering in support of their view (be careful to distinguish passages where the author is speaking for themselves and where they are explaining another author's view or considering objections!), and write down thoughts and questions in the margin as you react to each step in the argument.
- Ask yourself if you think what the author is saying is not only plausible but well-argued. If not, think about why not: Is it because the author's argument relies on a false premise, or is it because the author's reasoning is fallacious? Is there a more plausible or more arguable way of formulating the point the author hopes to make? Are there countervailing considerations, alternative positions, or further complications that the author fails to take into account? Even if you agree with the author, try to anticipate objections that other readers may reasonably raise and think about how you can respond to them on the author's behalf.

Class participation will make up 10% of your final grade.

4.3. Midterm and Final Exams

There will be a midterm and a final exam. A study guide, including possible essay prompts, will be distributed in advance of each exam. The final exam is not comprehensive, and will be of the same format as the midterm.

The midterm exam is scheduled for **Monday, February 26** during our regular class period, and the final exam **Tuesday, May 7, 3:30–5:30pm**. If you have a conflicting final exam, please contact me as soon as you can to arrange for a make-up.

The better of your two exams will make up 35% of your final grade, and the other one 25%.

4.4. Final Project

You are required to complete a final project for this course. This can be either a traditional term paper or an equally substantial creative project of your choice—for example, you might want to record a podcast episode, imagine an alternative history, curate an exhibit, reenact a story or a moment, create a zine, adapt a reading into a different medium, illustrate an argument or debate, build a website or an application, design a board game, script and produce a crash course video, profile a community member, or draft a short story or a piece of public writing (really, the sky's the limit!). My hope is that the flexibility of the format will allow you to further engage with our course materials in a way that suits and reflects your own interests.

I'm happy to consider group projects as well, but I will need to know that you have a clear and explicit division of labor as well as a workable assessment and accountability plan.

Unless you are writing a term paper, you must meet with me **by Friday, April 12 at the very latest** to discuss your project. You are then required to finalize your plan by submitting a brief project proposal to D2L **by 11:59pm on Friday, April 19**. While the proposal is not graded, failure to submit one may result in a zero on the final project. Your final project is due to D2L **by 11:59pm on Friday, May 3**, and will make up 30% of your final grade.

5. HONORS CREDIT

If you would like to take this class for honors credit, please contact me as early as possible (and definitely by Wednesday, February 7) to discuss your idea. The honors contract will require you to complete an additional independent project that explores one of our course themes in greater depth. For more information, please consult <https://honors.arizona.edu/academics/honors-contracts>.

6. EXCUSED ABSENCES

Please email me if there is a reason you can't come to class, but you *don't* need to show me any kind of documentation. This is an honor system, and I trust you not to abuse it—all I ask is you also be flexible and considerate when you are in a position of power to do so.

- The UA policy concerning class attendance, participation, and administrative drops is available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop>.
- The UA policy regarding absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice will be accommodated where reasonable: <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy>.
- Absences preapproved by the UA Dean of Students (or the Dean's designee) will be honored; see <http://policy.arizona.edu/employmenthuman-resources/attendance>.

7. LATE ASSIGNMENTS, EXTENSIONS, AND MAKE-UPS

No late assignments will be accepted, but an extension will ordinarily be granted as long as you (1) have a clear plan for completing the assignment and (2) let me know your plan by email **no later than 6 hours before the deadline** (unless the delay is justified). Likewise, there is *no* need to show me any kind of documentation.

As an instructor, I always appreciate students asking for extensions ahead of time when possible. Make-ups for missed assignments after the fact are generally disfavored, and will be granted only to accommodate emergencies and other unexpected circumstances, such as physical (including mental) health, child care, family emergencies, and military duty. We can always work something out, but it's important that you contact me as soon as you can.

8. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

8.1. Code of Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>.

8.2. Plagiarism

I view plagiarism as a *very serious violation of the university's Code of Academic Integrity, and you should as well.* I strongly encourage you to review this helpful guide prepared by the university library: <https://new.library.arizona.edu/research/citing/plagiarism>. I understand different instructors may draw the line somewhat differently; if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism for the purposes of our course, please don't hesitate to ask me.

8.3. Inappropriate Use of Class Notes and Course Materials

Disseminating class notes or course materials beyond the classroom community, such as selling them to other students or to a third party for resale, is strictly prohibited. Violations to this rule are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA email to sell or buy such notes or course materials are subject to Student Code of Conduct violations for misuse of student email addresses. This misconduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

9. (LACK OF) DIVERSITY IN PHILOSOPHY

Unfortunately, philosophy as an institutionalized discipline is remarkably white, cis male, straight, able-bodied, and middle-class. This lack of diversity is often apparent just from the topics and authors typically taught in introductory philosophy courses. However, philosophy as a whole is becoming more and more diverse thanks to the efforts of several generations of philosophers. As a philosophy student, you can also help the profession address its diversity and inclusiveness problems by seriously engaging with minority authors and supporting your fellow minority students.

The American Philosophical Association (APA) has a useful handout for minority undergraduate students in philosophy, which you can read here: https://www.apaonline.org/resource/resmgr/diversity/Advice_for_Undergrads.pdf.

A valuable local opportunity is the Arizona Feminist Philosophy Graduate Conference organized annually by graduate students at the UA Department of Philosophy every spring. The conference brings together

graduate students working on feminist issues from around the country and the world. You can find more information and watch recordings of past talks at <https://femphilaz.com>.

10. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Overview

- Jan 10 (W) Introduction
- Please watch in advance of class: *The Heretics* (2009), 95 min
- A New Wave of Feminism*
- Jan 15 (M) Martin Luther King Day (no class)
- Suggested: *My Name Is Pauli Murray* (2021), 91 min
- Jan 17 (W) Woman as the Other
- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1949):
 - “Translators’ Note,” pp. xviii–xx
 - “Introduction,” pp. 3–17
 - “Biological Data,” pp. 21–26, 44–48
 - “History,” pp. 71–75
- Jan 22 (M) Woman as a Situation
- Please read any one of the following three selections from *The Second Sex* (be prepared to discuss the selections you decide to read with the rest of the class!):
 - “Childhood” pp. 283–340 (feel free to skim the long block quotes, but think about why Beauvoir might feel the need to cite such extensive evidence)
 - “Sexual Initiation,” pp. 383–416
 - “The Lesbian,” pp. 417–39, and “The Woman in Love,” pp. 683–708
- Jan 22 (M) Women in the Civil Rights Movement
- Pauli Murray and Mary O. Eastwood, “Jane Crow and the Law: Sex Discrimination and Title VII,” *George Washington Law Review* (1965), pp. 232–42
 - Casey Hayden and Mary King, “Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo” (1965)
- Jan 24 (W) “The Problem That Has No Name”
- Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963):
 - “The Problem That Has No Name,” pp. 11–27
 - “The Crisis in Woman’s Identity,” pp. 62–72
 - “A New Life Plan for Women,” pp. 326–64
- Jan 29 (M) The Emergence of the Women’s Liberation Movement
- New York Radical Women, “Principles” and “No More Miss America!” (1968)
 - *Notes from the First Year* (1968) (“Notes I”):

- Shulamith Firestone, “When Women Rap about Sex,” pp. 8–11
- *Notes from the Second Year* (1970) (“Notes II”):
 - “A Female Junkie Speaks,” interview by Lucille Iverson, p. 31
 - Kathie Sarachild, “Program for Feminist Consciousness-Raising,” pp. 78–80
 - Irene Peslikis, “Resistance to Consciousness-Raising,” p. 81
 - Jennifer Gardner, “False Consciousness,” pp. 82–83
 - Carol Hanisch, “A Critique of the Miss America Protest,” pp. 86–88
- *Notes from the Third Year* (1971) (“Notes III”):
 - Sherry Sonnett Trumbo, “A Woman’s Place Is in the Oven,” pp. 90–92

Jan 31 (W) “The Personal is Political”

- *Notes I*:
 - Carol Hanisch and Elizabeth Sutherland, “Women of the World Unite—We Have Nothing to Lose but Our Men!,” pp. 12–16
 - Anne Koedt, “Women and the Radical Movement,” pp. 26–27
- *Notes II*:
 - Joreen (Jo Freeman), “The BITCH Manifesto,” pp. 5–9
 - Pat Mainardi, “The Politics of Housework,” pp. 28–31
 - Anne Koedt, “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm,” pp. 37–41
 - Carol Hanisch, “The Personal Is Political,” pp. 76–78
 - Barbara Susan, “An Abortion Testimonial,” p. 94
 - Kate Millet, “Sexual Politics: A Manifesto for Revolution,” pp. 111–12
 - “Redstockings Manifesto,” pp. 112–13
- *Notes III*:
 - Judy Syfers, “Why I Want a Wife,” pp. 13–14
 - André Leo, “ADC: Marriage to the State,” pp. 66–68

Feb 5 (M) “The Lavender Menace” and “The Transsexual Empire”

- Susan Brownmiller, “‘Sisterhood Is Powerful’: A Member of the Women’s Liberation Movement Explains What It’s All About” (1970), p. 140
- “Women’s Lib: A Second Look,” *Time*, December 14, 1970, p. 50.
- Radicalesbians, “The Woman Identified Woman” (1970), reprinted in *Notes III*, pp. 81–84
- Sidney Abbott and Barbara Love, “Is Women’s Liberation a Lesbian Plot?” (1971)
- “A Collective Editorial,” *The Lesbian Tide* (December 1972), pp. 21, 29
- *The Lesbian Tide* (May–June 1973):
 - “Black Caucus Position,” p. 19
 - Barbara McLean, “Dairy of a Mad Organizer,” pp. 36–38 (“Friday, 9:00,” and the first six paragraphs of “Saturday, the 14th”)

- Robin Morgan, “Lesbianism and Feminism: Synonyms or Contradictions?,” pp. 30–34
 - Beth Elliot, “Of Infidels and Inquisitions,” pp. 15, 26
 - Lou Sullivan, “A Transvestite Answers a Feminist” (1973), pp. 9–11, 14
- Feb 7 (W) The Possibility of Feminism?
- Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement” (1977)
 - bell hooks, “Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women” (1984)

Sex and the State

- Feb 12 (M) Gender vs. Liberty?
- Ruth Bader Ginsburg, “Some Thoughts on Autonomy and Equality in Relation to *Roe v. Wade*” (1985)
- Feb 14 (W) Rape and the State
- Catharine A. MacKinnon, “Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence” (1983)
- Feb 19 (M) Midterm Exam Review
- Feb 21 (W) Study Day (no class – Ding in New Orleans for conference presentation)
- Feb 26 (M) Midterm Exam**
- Feb 28 (W) Sex and Oppression
- Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality* (1983), chaps. 1–2
- Mar 4 (M) Spring Recess (no class)
- Mar 6 (W) Spring Recess (no class)
- Mar 11 (M) Silencing Women
- Rae Langton, “Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts” (1993)
- Mar 13 (W) “Pleasure under Patriarchy”?
- Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (1989), pp. 118–19, 122–54
- Mar 18 (M) “Can You Fuck without Losing Your Virginity?”
- Marilyn Frye, *Willful Virgin* (1992), pp. 109–19, 124–37
- Mar 20 (W) No Class (Ding in Portland for conference presentation)

Queer and Trans Feminism

- Mar 25 (M) The UCLA Gender Clinic
- In-Class Screening: *Framing Agnes* (2022), 75min
- Mar 25 (M) The “Transsexual Empire” Revisited
- Sandy Stone, “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto” (1991)
- Mar 27 (W) Sex without Sex?

- Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (1992), pp. 1–14, 20–21, 24–32
 - C. Jacob Hale, “Leatherdyke Boys and Their Daddies: How to Have Sex without Women or Men” (1997)
- Apr 1 (M) Lesbian Separatism Revisited
- Cheshire Calhoun, “Separating Lesbian Theory from Feminist Theory” (1994)

Knowledge and Ignorance

- Apr 3 (W) Producing Ignorance
- Nancy Tuana, “Coming to Understand: Orgasm and the Epistemology of Ignorance” (1994)
- Apr 8 (M) Discrediting Women
- Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice* (2007), pp. 1–29
- Apr 10 (W) Misconstruing Women
- Fricker, pp. 147–75
- Apr 12 (F)** **If pursuing the creative final project option, clear plan with Ding by this day**
- Apr 15 (M) Knowing Reality
- Linda Martín Alcoff, “Sotomayor’s Reasoning” (2010)

Futures?

- Apr 17 (W) Amelioration?
- Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” (2000)
- Apr 19 (F)** **Final project proposal due to D2L by 11:59pm**
- Apr 22 (M) Inclusion?
- Katharine Jenkins, “Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of *Woman*” (2016)
- Apr 24 (W) Reconfiguration?
- Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl* (2007):
 - “Deconstructive Surgery,” pp. 229–232
 - “Love Rant,” pp. 277–283
 - “Barrette Manifesto,” pp. 315–318
 - “Putting the Feminine Back into Feminism,” pp. 319–20, 325–43
- Apr 29 (M) Self-Construction?
- Rowan Bell, “Being Your Best Self: Authenticity, Morality, and Gender Norms” (forthcoming)

May 1 (W)	Final Exam Review
May 3 (F)	Final project due to D2L by 11:59pm
May 7 (T)	Final Exam (3:30–5:30pm)

11. RESPECT, SUPPORT, AND CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER

11.1. Materials in this course

Since many of the issues we will cover in this course are not only intellectually but also *personally* relevant, you might find it difficult to read and discuss certain course materials. I want to acknowledge that. It's perfectly understandable.

It's therefore important that we *respect*, *support*, and *care for* one another throughout the course. Please always feel free to talk to me if you anticipate certain topics will be especially difficult for you, or if you think the way they get discussed in the class is disrespectful or otherwise problematic.

11.2. How to Respect, Support, and Care for One Another

Here are some concrete examples of how you can respect, support, and care for your classmates and instructor:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>Class Discussions</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Value everyone's contribution to class discussions; – Challenge remarks, jokes, and examples that are racist, sexist, heterosexist, cissexist, misogynistic, transmisogynistic, xenophobic, ableist, ageist, classist, etc.; – Disagree in a way that takes other people's ideas seriously and sincerely; – Keep discussions inclusive by avoiding talking to only a few specific people. |
| <i>Classroom Behavior</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Try to remain quiet if you have to arrive late or leave early; – Avoid starting to pack things up until class is completely over; – Listen attentively and avoid distracting or interrupting behavior, such as chatting with the person next to you or checking your phone. |
| <i>Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use the pronouns and name you are asked to when you refer to a person; – Avoid assuming a person's pronouns, gender identity, or sexual orientation based on their appearance, voice, or name; – Be careful not to disclose anyone's gender identity or sexual orientation (i.e., out them) without their permission, even if they are already out in the classroom—it can put lives in danger; – Never inquire about anyone's genitalia, deadname, "before" photos, medical history, assigned gender at birth, sex life, and so on; – Use inclusive language (for helpful examples, see https://www.apaonline.org/page/nonexist and https://transjournalists.org/style-guide). |

If you feel any aspect of this course makes it difficult for you to participate fully, I want to know. This is *very* important to me.

11.3. University Statements on Discrimination, Harassment, Threatening Behavior, and Campus Safety

To foster a positive learning environment, students and instructors have a shared responsibility. We want a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where all of us feel comfortable with each other and where we can challenge ourselves to succeed. To that end, our focus is on the tasks at hand and not on extraneous activities (e.g., texting, chatting, reading a newspaper, making phone calls, web surfing, etc.).

The University of Arizona is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination. In support of this commitment, the University prohibits discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, based on a protected classification, including race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information. For more information, including how to report a concern, please see <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>.

Our classroom is a place where everyone is encouraged to express well-formed opinions and their reasons for those opinions. We also want to create a tolerant and open environment where such opinions can be expressed without resorting to bullying or discrimination of others.

The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself. See <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>.

For a list of emergency procedures for all types of incidents, please visit the website of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT): <https://cirt.arizona.edu/case-emergency/overview>. Also watch the video available at https://arizona.sabacloud.com/Saba/Web_spf/NA7P1PRD161/common/learningeventdetail/crtfy0000000000003560.

12. STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES

- Campus Health Services*
 - Campus Health: <https://health.arizona.edu>
 - Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS): <https://health.arizona.edu/counseling-psych-services>
 - Mental Health Tools from CAPS: <https://health.arizona.edu/mental-health-tools>

- Student Assistance*
 - Office of the Dean of Students: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/support/student-assistance>
 - Survivor Advocacy: <https://survivoradvocacy.arizona.edu>
 - Fostering Success: <https://fosteringsuccess.arizona.edu>

- Advising*
 - Find your philosophy advisor: <https://philosophy.arizona.edu/advising>
 - Major in philosophy: <https://philosophy.arizona.edu/why-study-philosophy>

- Writing*
 - Think Tank Writing Center: <https://thinktank.arizona.edu/writing-center>
 - Writing Skills Improvement Program: <https://wsip.arizona.edu>

- Campus Pantry: <https://campuspantry.arizona.edu>
- UA Childcare Choice Program for Students: <https://lifework.arizona.edu/programs/childcare-choice/student>
- Resources from the Office of LGBTQ Affairs: <https://lgbtq.arizona.edu/students>
- Disability Resource Center: <https://drc.arizona.edu>

13. ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

At the University of Arizona, we strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please contact the Disability Resource Center (520-621-3268, <https://drc.arizona.edu/>) to establish reasonable accommodations.

14. SYLLABUS CHANGE

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.